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Correspondence.

A CHEAP SCREEN.

SIR: Will you give me some hints in reference to a screen which I wish to paint? I have but one room in which to teach my class and to receive my visitors. I design the screen to hide my easel and unfinished work, and as a decoration for the room. I have an idea of four panels about five and a half feet, by two or two and a half feet wide, and of painting each panel to represent a season. (1) As to material, what can I use that is inexpensive? I cannot afford silk or plush, or anything fine. (2) And which is better, to paint in oil or in water-colors?

S. E. B., Waxahachie, Texas.

ANSWER.—(1) Four panels, each measuring five feet by two, make a screen of a very good size. A cheap but effective material for a screen to be used for ordinary purposes is Canton flannel. Get a rich old-gold color, or deep crimson, or olive—any of these tones being good for a ground. If you wish to be very economical, a good screen can be made from an ordinary clothes-horse, such as can be bought for a dollar. We know several artists who have them in their studios covered with draperies so as to be unrecognizable. Tack the cloth firmly to the wood on each panel of the clothes-horse, using brass-headed nails, and the result will be very satisfactory. Another good material for a screen is common unbleached sheeting, which is tacked on in the same way, and can then be decorated with large, easily-painted designs in oil colors. To represent the four seasons, paint on each panel of the screen a group of flowers, each design different and suggesting a season. Thus, for spring, compose branches of apple blossoms; for summer, roses, or some other appropriate flower; for autumn, golden rod and wild grasses, or autumn leaves; for the winter panel branches of holly with its beautiful red berries would be effective. Your desire for an inexpensive screen stands in the way of more elaborate designs, such as could be painted on a canvas ground, where landscapes might be used to designate the different seasons. Symbolical figures with accessories would also be effective, but would require careful work and a very thorough knowledge of painting, without which it is best to attempt only simple designs. (2) It depends entirely on what is to be painted, whether oil or water-colors are the best. For a student beginning to use color in studying from the life, oil colors are best, giving greater freedom of touch. In decorative painting, on a screen for instance, such as has just been mentioned, when the design is large and bold, oil colors are the best. For small articles on delicate materials water-colors are preferable. In such cases the opaque colors should always be used. In painting on paper with water-colors artists prefer the transparent washes, though gouache is also employed with good effect.

GILDING FOR BRONZE.

SIR: Can you recommend an inexpensive preparation for gilding bronze?

F. B., Topeka, Kan.

ANSWER.—Two and one half pounds cyanide of potash, five ounces carbonate of potash, and two ounces cyanate of potash, the whole diluted in five pints of water, containing in solution one fourth ounce chloride of gold. The mixture must be used at boiling heat, and after it has been applied, the gilt surface must be varnished over.

BLOOM IN VARNISHING A PAINTING.

SIR: What do you advise me to use to prevent blooming in varnishing a picture. Will not the addition of a little linseed oil answer the purpose?

BEN. F., Cairo, O.

ANSWER.—Good mastic varnish will nearly always bloom. When the bloom begins to appear after varnishing, sponge the picture with cold water, wipe it dry with a silk handkerchief and polish by gently rubbing it with a second one. Repeat this at intervals of about a week so long as there is a tendency to blooming. Afterward, to preserve the brilliant polish of the varnish, the picture should be rubbed gently with an old silk handkerchief, breathing, if necessary, upon any dull places, and then rubbing. Frequent varnishing is objectionable. To add linseed oil to varnish to prevent blooming is equally so; for if such varnish be applied to a picture which has never been varnished, the glazing, when the picture is cleaned, will all come off with the varnish. Oil should never be applied to the surface of a picture, unless for the temporary brightening of the colors.

WAXING FLOORS.

SIR: I notice you advise putting beeswax and turpentine on floors of hard wood and also stained wood. Will you kindly inform me how it is prepared for use?

J. N. W., Rutland, Vt.

ANSWER.—Take a pound of the best beeswax, cut it up into very small pieces and let it thoroughly dissolve in three pints of turpentine, stirring occasionally if necessary. The mixture should be only a trifle thicker than the clear turpentine. Apply it with a rag to the surface of the floor, which should be smooth and perfectly clean. This is the difficult part of the work, for, if you put on either too much or too little, a good polish will be impossible. The right amount varies, less being required for a hard, close-grained wood, and more if the wood is soft or open-grained. Even professional "waxers" are sometimes obliged to experiment, and novices should always try a square foot or two first. Put on what you think will be enough and leave the place untouched and unstepped on for twenty-four hours, or longer if needful. When it is thoroughly dry rub it with a hard brush

until it shines. If it polishes well, repeat the process over the entire floor. If it does not, remove the wax with fine sand-paper and try again, using more or less than before as may be necessary; and continue your experimenting until you secure the desired result. If the mixture is slow in drying add a little of any of the common "driers" sold by paint-dealers, Japan for instance, in the proportion of one part of the drier to six parts of turpentine. When the floor is a large one you may agreeably vary the tedious work of polishing by strapping a brush to each foot and skating over it.

DECORATING A SITTING-ROOM.

SIR: I would like to ask some questions as to the decoration of a sitting-room about twenty feet square with south and east windows. It has a very handsome and elaborate white marble mantel, and a cornice of stucco-work over half a yard deep (much of it on the ceiling) with a large centre-piece. The wood-work, in wide heavy mouldings, is painted white. The black walnut furniture is upholstered in dark green rep; carpet, drab and scarlet. What tints shall the wood-work be, and shall the walls be papered or frescoed?

OLD SUBSCRIBER.

ANSWER.—Color the ground of the ceiling light bluish sage green, with the centre-piece and cornice greenish old gold or citrine, and the cove of the cornice (if there is one) dull olive. Make the wood-work dark tea green. The walls should be papered, with a golden olive tint predominating. Have the white mantel draped—or paint it a dark bronze green.

A GOOD PLACE FOR A VALANCE.

SIR: Would a handsome dado paper do to fill in the space between the top of a window and the curtain-pole? or what would you advise me to use? The room is papered, the window is low, and when the curtain pole was fastened on top of the window frame it did not look well.

FAIRFAX, Galt, Canada.

ANSWER.—A valance of the same material as the curtain would be a better treatment; make it the same length as the pole inside the ends, and fix it to the wall behind the pole; trim it with fringe or a plain hem.

BANDING CHINA.

SIR: (1) What is the best self-centring wheel for banding china plates, and where can it be got? (2) Are there any stylographic or other kinds of pencils made, that will hold a quantity of mineral color for banding a large quantity of plates, without constantly replenishing the brush? (3) In short, is there any specially quick process for banding a large quantity of plates, and cups and saucers other than the regular process with a brush and ordinary wheel? Some English process is said to be in vogue in which a wheel of rubber or some other material is run around the plate with a guide, the wheel first being rolled over a layer of color. (4) Do you know anything of this process?

J. M., New Brighton, Pa.

ANSWER.—(1) Alling's self-centring wheel, sold for \$12 by Marsching & Co., 27 Park Place. (2) We have never heard of any. (3) We know of none. (4) We do not.

PAINTING JACQUEMINOT ROSES.

A. D. B., Portland, Me.—In oil colors the deep red of this rose is painted by mixing madder lake with vermilion, a very little white being added for the high lights. Use raw umber, cobalt, and madder lake for half-tints, and bone brown and carmine for shadows, with a little black added to the latter for the darkest shadows. If poppy oil is used, and the flower is painted two or three times it will have the velvety appearance desired. In water-colors the deep red of the rose is painted with vermilion and carmine mixed; half tints with crimson lake, raw umber, and a little carmine; outside of the petals with crimson lake; deep shades with carmine and bone brown, or sepia, or a little black with the carmine; high lights with rose carthame and vermilion. In mineral colors the high lights are painted with rose pompadour, the deep red with rouge laqueux, shaded with purple, No. 2, and gray noir mixed. The colors of this rose cannot be obtained with one firing. Use the same colors in painting the second time, taking the greatest care not to paint the colors too thick, or they will chip off. If the rose pompadour fires the first time much too light add a little rouge laqueux for the second firing.

SASH CURTAINS.

MRS. E. W. A., Bay City, Mich.—Sash curtains are usually fixed in place on slender rods of iron or brass, say one fourth of an inch in diameter, a rod being used at both the top and the bottom of each curtain. They can slide on small rings, or the rods can pass through a wide hem. The height must be regulated by personal wishes or requirements; two feet six inches or three feet is ample; sometimes, when windows are small, less is desirable. Embroidery or other ornamentation should be on the street side, and the curtains should be faced on the inside with the same material—that is, two thicknesses should be used—when the outer side is ornamented.

TO TRANSFER PRINTS TO WOOD.

F. T., Cleveland.—The white wood used being perfectly smooth, should receive a few coats of French polish. The print to be transferred having been dampened with a sponge soaked in spirits of wine is placed on the wood with a piece of thick cloth over it. A warm iron is then passed gently over the cloth, care being taken not to shift the picture. Keep the iron rubbing backward and forward for ten or fifteen minutes, then take off your cloth and leave it for some hours. Now get some

cold water, dampen your finger in it, and rub the paper. Great care must be taken not to disturb the impression. Keep damping your finger as you go on. When you have got the paper all off, you can polish over. Any kind of print will do which is not glazed. Ink impressions are the most easily transferred.

SUNDRY QUERIES ANSWERED.

S. E. B., Waxahachie, Texas.—Read the article on "Lustra Painting" in THE ART AMATEUR for October, 1882, or write to Bragdon & Fenetti, No. 1 Congress Park Place, Saratoga Springs, N. Y. They sell the materials and give instruction.

FRANCES J., Brooklyn, N. Y.—(1) The so-called "Bayeux Tapestry" is not tapestry it all; but simply the largest sampler known. (2) There is a good deal of nonsense talked about the lost systems of painting. As Hayden says: "Titian got his colors from the color shops on the Rialto, as we get ours from Brown's; and if Apelles or Titian were living now, they would paint just as good works with our brushes and colors as with their own."

FAN, Newark, N. J.—(1) Send to D. B. Bedell & Co., 868 Broadway, New York, for their catalogue of white ware for china decoration. (2) In painting fruit it is important to match well the different shades of color, and to lay them one over the other while they are still wet. The softener flattens them and helps the tints to mingle. Leaves and stalks are not dabbled. (3) For a peach use flat yellow tints, graduated into green, and mixed with gray in the shadows. Dabble carefully. Be careful to add more oil to the red part, which is softened afterward very easily with a dabber, the red blending freely with its neighboring color from the effect of the oil.

SUPPLEMENT AND JEWELRY DESIGNS.

Plate 269—"Buttercups"—is the fourth of the series of wild-flower designs for dessert-plates to be outlined and painted in flat colors. Make the centre of the flower and the outside of the petals silver yellow, and the face of the petals orange yellow; centre dot of flower, green; leaves, dull green (emerald green and a little apple green and brown green); stems, lighter green. For the background add flux to brown green. Outline distinctly.

Plate 270 is a set of designs for wood-carving—horizontal lines of decoration—from the Cincinnati School of Design, suitable for the edges of shelves, and other horizontal surfaces, where the face to be decorated is from one to three inches in width.

Plate 271 is a series of monograms in "C."

Plate 272 is a collection of designs and suggestions suitable for jewellers' use. (See also below.)

Plate 273 gives designs—"Apple Blossoms"—for a cider mug and tankard. Cream-white ware furnishes a good ground for these designs. Draw them with india-ink, using a fine brush. Put in the shadows of the flowers with tint, mixed from carmine and apple green. Touch the petals here and there with the palest wash of mixing yellow. For the pink touches on the petals use English rose in powder, well mixed with turpentine and a little lavender oil. For the stamens, use sepia; for the calyx of the buds, grass green, and the same for the leaf stems. The leaves should be painted in grass green, with a little cobalt mixed; shade with brown green. For the back of the leaf, mix a little deep purple with the green to give the grayish effect. Use for the branches brown No. 3, shaded with brown No. 17, and a little deep purple. Outline all the work and the veinings of the leaves with color made from three parts brown No. 17 and one part deep purple.

Plate 274 is an embroidery design—"Pond Lilies"—suitable for a sofa pillow or the end of a table scarf. The foundation is of shaded crimson plush, and the leaves are worked in the usual way with silk arrasene in deep leaf-green shades. The petals of the flowers are first filled in with double zephyr to bring them into half relief, and are then embroidered in white filosele, delicately shaded with a few stitches of light pink and pale sage green. The stamens are worked in yellow chenille.

Plate 275 is a South Kensington design for a table cover border, suitable also for embroidering a dress or an apron.

On page 42 will be found original designs by H. L. Bouché for a lace pin to be made of gold and set with turquoises or diamonds, or of silver perfectly plain; a diamond and pearl pendant; another lace pin of silver or gold chased; a pair of sleeve links, rough finished, set with gold-colored stones; two brooches with monograms and borders of chased gold; another pair of sleeve links; a gold enamelled cross; a brooch with a centre of rough finished gold, and the name Marie in relief; two lace pins of colored gold or open work; two seals of chased gold or saw-pierced; two bracelets of gold or silver, to be made of separate pieces hinged together to form a pliable chain; a lace pin in the shape of a crown, in which a monogram might be worked in place of the scrolls; and three badges to be made of gold or silver and used for college or regatta prizes.

MR. SHUGIO, manager of the First Japanese Manufacturing and Trading Company, who has been in Japan since last December, collecting antique and modern art objects, is obtaining materials for a book of Japanese decorative designs, which he will publish soon after his return to America.

W. A. CROFFUT'S "Midsummer Lark" (Holt & Co.'s Leisure Hour Series) is a book of European travels in rhyming prose, embellished with incidental verse. The author's intention is humorous, and whoever lays patient siege to the book will find frequent occasion for smiles.